

*A True Copy of the PETITION and REASONS thereunto Annexed, of the Master-Cutting-Tailors, and Journey-men, Freemen of London, in answer to the Petition of some Freemen-working-Tailors, of the said City.*

To the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, Court of Aldermen, and Common Council of the Honourable City of London,

*The Humble Petition of several Inhabitants, Master-Cutting-Tailors, and Journey-men Freemen, of the same City,*

*London Tailors*

*Sheweth,*

**T**HAT whereas, in the Reign of *Philip* and *Mary*, the Common Council of this City, out of their grave Wisdoms and Care, for preserving the Rights and Priviledges of the Freemen thereof, did make an Act, That no manner of Person, that was not Free of this City, should work with a Freeman thereof, under the Penalty of Five pounds; which Act was of great use and benefit to the Handy Crafts, Freemen of this City; but for many years past, especially since the late dreadful Fire, the said Act hath not been duly Prosecuted; and many Sales-men, and other Wealthy Master-Tailors, for their private Lucre, have entertained great numbers of Forreigners and Aliens, to work as Journry-men, who in time became Masters: Others have taken Country Lads by Covenant, to work for two or three years, and to serve the remainder in Journey-Work, at easie Rates; and some have been employed, that ran away from their Masters in the Country, so that it is become a Custom, and the Laws of this Ancient and Honourable City derided and contemned: And thereupon, some of your Petitioners, for preventing the Ruin of themselves and Families, in the year 1679 did Petition the Lord Mayor, and Court of Aldermen, who Ordered the said Act to be put in Execution; and without due Observance and Prosecution of the same, the Priviledges and Livelihood of your Petitioners and Families, and several other Handy-crafts, Freemen of this City, would be supplanting, and of no benefit, and the Charters and Rights of this City wholly Contemned, and rendered Obsolete:

Wherefore we humbly beg your Lordship, and this Honourable Court, to consider the Premises, and be pleased to Order, That the Execution of the said Act may be Revived and Continued, according to the true intent and meaning thereof, that so the Priviledges and Livelihoods of your Petitioners may be Defended and Maintained.

*And they shall ever Pray, &c.*

*Reasons of the Freemen Taylors, Masters and Journeymen; for the Continuance and putting in Execution of the Act mentioned in the above Petition.*

1. **W**HEREAS the Act of *Philip* and *Mary* above mentioned, was at first made, and still is, if rightly observed, of great good and benefit to all the Handycraft Freemen of this City; And whereas it is pretended, the ill Consequences thereof soon appeared, by making a following Act of Common Council, empowering the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and their Successors, to dispence with any Person or Persons, being Free of this City, for the Rigor of the former Act.

Now we humbly Offer and say, That the said last Act did in no wise Suspend or Diminish the Force and Effect of the former; But the true meaning was, that the Lord Mayor and Aldermen might ease some poor Persons, by taking off part of the said Fine, as they should think fit.

2. That as the Suburbs are encreased and become Populous, so the more occasion to preserve the Priviledges of the City from being encroached upon and lost; And were all Persons in the City, that do Employ Forreigners out of it, Prosecuted according to the first mentioned Act, the Trade would be far better kept within the City than now it is: And by reason of the Tolleration of Forreigners, several Apprentices that have served their times, refuse to take up their Freedoms, seeing Forreigners are Employed before them.

3. That as to a Glut of Trade at some certain times in the year, all Handycraft may pretend the like, as once the Hatmakers did, and admitted Forreigners to work to their great damage; and in two years time were so wearied, that they desired to return to their former Priviledge: And if any Extraordinary Business happens, it hath formerly been a Common Practice, for one Master to lend his Men to another, who used to return the same upon the like occasion. Neither do the Freemen Exact Extraordinary Wages; It being well known, that the Forreigners in the *Strand*, and those Parts, in the Spring time do take five Shillings a Week more than the Freemen have in the City; There being by far more Forreigners loose and Idle Persons than Freemen, they generally having no Setled Habitations, and oftentimes Marrying Citizens Maid-Servants, do leave Three or Four Children to be maintained out of the Labours of the Freemen.

4. That whereas several Aliens and Strangers do follow Trades for themselves, they are chiefly Encouraged so to do, by being Employed by the Principal Citizens: And they might long ago have been suppressed and kept under, had the abovesaid Act, and the Statute of Queen *Elizabeth*, been put in due Execution. And formerly the Merchant-Tailors Company did Employ Persons to seize Garments that were made out of the City.

5. And for as much as the abovesaid Act is pretended severe against Strangers that are Travellers, it is well known, several Wealthy Men, have Employed them seven years together, as their Principal Men. And in a dead time have turned off *English* Protestants, and Entertained the said Strangers in their places; many of them being Notorious Papists.

*For these and many other Reasons, We humbly hope this Honourable Court will be pleased to Grant, that the above mentioned Act may be continued, and effectually Prosecuted; that we may enjoy the Priviledges of our Ancestors, and the Reward of our Services; and that the Ancient Laws and Franchises of this Honourable City, may not be Violated, and made subject to the ends of some self-Interested, Designing Persons.*